2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
Taira

at least check all transients. Another important duty is to prevent 625
use of explosives by fishermen, a difficult if not impossible assign- [226]
ment, for he must catch the fisherman *flagrante delicto* when he lands with fish killed in this way. There is no indication that villagers assist the policeman in detecting offenders.

Policing the village itself is not a difficult job. The absence of crime 625
and the low incidence of quarrels, disputes, and brawls would seem to 578
make policing unnecessary. Nevertheless, the policeman interferes at [674]
times in disputes. He considers it his duty when actual blows are exchanged and somebody is hurt. In such a case he "investigates," takes notes, and makes a report to the police department. During the entire field work, reportable incidents occurred at about the rate of one a month; in the two or three cases where violence occurred, the matter was settled peacefully later, although the policeman kept a record of it. The rare quarrels which do occur are usually the result of drinking or domestic disagreements, generated by financial problems. [273]

The policeman plays the role of judge and jury. In one case a young 625
man hit a woman and was temporarily detained by the policeman until 627
he made apologies to the victim. In disputes over business transactions, the policeman often arbitrates. In a dispute in which a Taira woman was accused of cheating a trader from another village, the policeman heard the case and ordered the Taira woman to make refunds over a period of time. The villagers seem to accept such arbitration. Serious disagreements seem to be unthinkable, and everyone fears public censure and ostracism. Court action is extremely rare and is referred to [692]
the provincial courts in the town of Nago.

The policeman is given high status by the villagers and commands 625
respect. He remains, probably by his own choice, a neutral person in [554]
village affairs. He attends village functions, where he is given a place among village leaders. Being friendly with many families, he visits and is visited by other men. It was noted that fishermen sometimes send a [662]
special catch to the policeman. But since this is a courtesy which is also common among farmers with regard to nonfarming people, such as teachers, one should not think of such actions as bribery. Mothers use [861]
the policeman as a threat in disciplining children. "If you do such a bad thing again, I'll take you to the police station." This, however, does not seem to instill any fear of his person, but rather a respect towards the general area in which the policeman lives. Village children play freely with the policeman's children, but his courtyard is entered less frequently by children than that of other villagers.

The head of the General Affairs Department at the township office 632
is charged with supervision of public order. It is not clear how much 647
this is a self-assigned task. During several occasions, when an alarm 625

3. Police

625

Local governments of the municipalities ('shi-chō-son') and the various 'ku' (villages and wards) exercise no control over the police stationed in their areas. Central police headquarters are located in Naha, and the organization of the police command is outside the regular civil structure except at the top national level. The police officer located in Kanegusuku-son reports directly to the district police headquarters in Itoman which in turn reports to Naha. In addition to maintaining law and order the police are charged with certain responsibilities in the fields of sanitation, health, and public welfare. Crime rates on Okinawa are low, particularly [674] in the rural areas, and policemen stationed there rarely face serious problems of law violation. A 'son' policeman has a "beat" which he is supposed to patrol each day unless other business is pressing. Actually his visits to some of the villages are rather infrequent, since there is little need for his presence. When a villager dies, it is usually the policeman who checks and certifies the cause of death. Certain dangerous or [744] highly contagious diseases such as leprosy or smallpox must by law be reported, and any infractions of this are usually investigated by the police. If a restaurant or food store is reported as unsanitary, it is the police who take steps to see that the situation is corrected.

Not infrequently the policeman is called upon to function informally 625 as a judge in settling minor disputes which in the United States would be 627 taken to court. One man rented out a room in his home to a former schoolmate; after living and eating there for several months, the roomer disappeared without making any payment for his room and board. A few months later the owner located this person's place of employment, collared him as he left work, and dragged him to the nearest policeman. The policeman listened patiently to both sides of the argument and then ruled that the roomer must pay the entire amount due the owner, ¥6000 ($50.00), at the rate of ¥2000 per month. The two disputants signed an agreement to this effect, and the policeman also signed it "to make it official". An American would regard this action as an abuse of police power; yet, an Okinawan would see nothing untoward in it. In light of this it is worth noting [178] that the jiturei who headed the rural district (majiri) under the old kingdom functioned as policeman, judge, and administrator.

In the matter of juvenile delinquency the school and police are re- 871 ported to work closely together. One police officer stated that when juve- 625 niles commit misdemeanors in his area they are usually turned over to their 674 schools for special "education". That an errant child should be released to the custody of his school rather than to his family would seem an inconsistency in a society which places so much emphasis on family. In America [171] and perhaps in all of Western society the teaching of ethics is largely a function of the home, but in Japan and Okinawa this is considered a task for the school.

To an outsider Okinawan police appear to be efficient in the per- 625 formance of their duty and possessed of a pride in their job and a fairly